

Message Text

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APPROVED BY EUR:W H LUERS

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TO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 027124

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PEPR, CVIS, SHUM, OVIP (CEAUSESCU, NICOLAE), RO

SUBJECT: LUERS/NICOLAE MEETING, JANUARY 31

1. AMBASSADOR NICOLAE ASKED TO CALL ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS TO DISCUSS FISHERIES AND THE CEAUSESCU AND PUNGAN VISITS TO THE U.S. FISHERIES WILL BE REPORTED IN SEPTTEL.

2. NICOLAE SAID THE ROMANIAN EMBASSY HAS BEEN GIVING THOUGHT TO PREPARATIONS FOR PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU'S VISIT IN APRIL. NICOLAE WONDERED OUT LOUD WHETHER U.S. ACTION ON TRADE AGREEMENT RENEWAL MIGHT BE SPEEDED UP AND PERHAPS COMPLETED BEFORE THE VISIT, AND HE ASKED WHAT DOCUMENTS MIGHT BE SIGNED DURING THE VISIT. NICOLAE SAID HE WAS NOT YET IN A POSITION TO OFFER SPECIFI- IDEAS.

3. LUERS SAID SOME IDEAS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BETWEEN ASSIST-
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ANT SECRETARY VEST AND COUNSELOR PUNGAN. SINCE SO MANY AGREEMENTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SIGNED BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ROMANIA, WE DO NOT SEE THAT THERE ARE MANY LEFT TO BE SIGNED BUT WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ROMANIAN VIEWS. IT MIGHT PERHAPS BE DESIRABLE TO ISSUE A DOCUMENT SUCH AS A JOINT DECLARATION THAT WOULD UPDATE THE PRINCIPLES ENDORSED

BY THE TWO PRESIDENTS IN 1973. LUERS SAID THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU. THE VISIT WOULD GIVE ROMANIA AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEAL WITH CONGRESSIONAL CONCERNS REGARDING MFN AND BOTH SIDES MIGHT PURSUE SOME MOVEMENT IN ECONOMIC RELATIONS, ALTHOUGH IT WAS IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THAT IN THIS FIELD THE U.S. PRIVATE SECTOR IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. LUERS SAID THAT WE WOULD ALSO BE RAISING QUESTIONS OF A HUMANITARIAN NATURE AND THOSE RELATING TO EMIGRATION. NICOLAE ASKED RHETORICALLY WHETHER ROMANIA MIGHT ALSO RAISE SUCH ISSUES. HE SAID HE WAS AWARE OF PROBLEMS THAT CERTAIN ROMANIANS ARE HAVING WITH REGARD TO IMMIGRATION INTO THE U.S. LUERS SAID IT WOULD BE PERFECTLY APPROPRIATE FOR THE ROMANIAN SIDE TO DISCUSS SUCH ISSUES WITH US. IN THIS CONTEXT, LUERS EXPRESSED OUR CONCERN OVER THE RECENT ROMANIAN DECISION NOT TO HONOR THE "VIENNA LETTER". WHEN NICOLAE SAID HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE "VIENNA LETTER", LUERS EXPLAINED ITS PURPOSE TO HIM AND POINTED OUT THAT THE PERSONS CURRENTLY STRANDED WERE SUFFERING CONSIDERABLE HARDSHIP, HAVING NEITHER JOBS NOR PLACES TO LIVE. LUERS POINTED OUT THAT ROMANIAN EMIGRANTS ARE TREATED QUITE WELL IN VIENNA AND THAT CONDITIONS IN THE REFUGEE FACILITIES COULD NOT BE VIEWED AS SUITABLE GROUNDS FOR THIS RECENT ROMANIAN DECISION. NICOLAE RESPONDED THAT THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED ABOUT CONDITIONS IN REFUGEE FACILITIES IN BOTH VIENNA AND ROME, AND PERHAPS

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THIS CONCERN LAY BEHIND THIS RECENT DECISION. NICOLAE REFERRED TO A RECENT ARTICLE PUBLISHED BY A ROMANIAN COMMUNITY MAGAZINE IN NEW YORK WHICH CRITICIZED CONDITIONS IN ITALY. LUERS ASKED THAT NICOLAE MAKE THIS ARTICLE AVAILABLE TO US SO THAT, IF NECESSARY, WE CAN TAKE REMEDIAL ACTION. LUERS EMPHASIZED THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE PROGRESS ON SUCH ISSUES SO AS TO SET THE STAGE FOR CEAUSESCU'S VISIT.

4. NICOLAE SAID THAT THE EMBASSY HAD RECEIVED NO GUIDANCE ON PLANNING FOR CEAUSESCU'S ITINERARY, BUT THE EMBASSY HAS RECOMMENDED TO BUCHAREST TWO ALTERNATIVE ITINERARIES FOR COMMENT. THE FIRST WOULD BE HOUSTON-DALLAS-NEW ORLEANS-FLORIDA-NEW YORK. THE SECOND WOULD BE HOUSTON-MINNEAPOLIS-NEW YORK. THE EMBASSY WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE FACT THAT PART OF THE VISIT WOULD TAKE PLACE OVER A WEEKEND AND HOPED THIS WOULD NOT COMPLICATE PROGRAMMING.

5. NICOLAE SAID THAT HE RECEIVED CONFIRMATION ON JANUARY 30 THAT PUNGAN DID INTEND TO COME TO WASHINGTON FEBRUARY 12-25. HE WAS TOLD THAT WE ARE WORKING ON A PROGRAM BASED

ON PUNGAN'S PREVIOUS SUGGESTIONS, AND THAT WE WOULD KEEP NICOLAE INFORMED ON PROGRESS.

6. LUERS EXPRESSED OUR CONCERN OVER DECREE 81 AND THE ODCD TAKE-OVER OF EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEES. HE SAID HE DID NOT WISH TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER IN DETAIL (THIS CAN BEST BE DONE IN BUCHAREST), BUT WE ARE DISTURBED BY THE POTENTIAL REDUCTION IN THE FREEDOM OUR EMBASSY WILL HAVE TO MANAGE ITS LOCAL EMPLOYEES AND BY THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPT TO STIPULATE WHAT SALARIES THEY CAN BE PAID BASED ON THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT'S DEFINITION OF THEIR FUNCTIONS. LUERS SAID HE IS AWARE THAT THE SOVIET UNION ENGAGES IN SIMILAR PRACTICES, BUT THAT SUCH AN ACTION IN THE CASE OF ROMANIA TOOK US A STEP AWAY - IN THE WRONG DIRECTION -
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FROM THE RELATIONSHIP WE HAD ENJOYED BEFORE. NICOLAE RESPONDED THAT THE PURPOSE OF DECREE 81 WAS TO SIMPLIFY THINGS, NOT TO COMPLICATE THEM. HE SAID WE MUST KEEP IN MIND THAT THERE IS NO FREE LABOR MARKET IN ROMANIA AND THAT ALL PERSONS ARE NEEDED IN THE ECONOMY. THE IMPORTANT THING WAS TO DECIDE CORRECTLY WHERE EACH PERSON COULD BEST SERVE. IN ADDITION, IT WAS NECESSARY TO MAKE SALARIES UNIFORM AND AVOID LARGE DISCREPANCIES IN SALARIES PAID TO PERSONS PERFORMING SIMILAR FUNCTIONS. LUERS RESPONDED THAT WE WELCOME ODCD'S HELP IN PROVIDING US WITH QUALIFIED PERSONNEL FOR OUR EMBASSY, BUT THIS APPROACH DID NOT SEEM THE BEST WAY TO DO SO. VANCE

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